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# US seeking to disrupt terror unit in Lebanon

## Intelligence effort to rise

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WASHINGTON - The United States has decided to intensify intelligence efforts to uncover and either disrupt or destroy the leadership of a Lebanese-Iranian terrorist group blamed for recent truck bombings of American facilities in Beirut, rather than calling on an air strike, which some officials had advocated.

Key policy makers said they have no doubt that last month's bombing of the American Embassy annex near East Beirut, together with previous similar attacks on US embassies in Lebanon and Kuwait and on a Marine barracks in Beirut, were the work of the Lebanese Hezbollah and Iranian Revolutionary Guards.

"It appears the same group did the planning," one official said, "but different teams were recruited to carry out each operation."

The ringleaders, sources said, belong to Hezbollah, which means Party of God, and is made up of thousands of radical Lebanese Shiites, and to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, about 1000 of whom operate out of the Abdullah military barracks near Baalbek, in eastern Lebanon. The Revolutionary Guards came from Iran by way of Syria during Israel's invasion of Lebanon.

"But it's misleading to suggest they have a definable, specific headquarters, or a known table of organization," another official said. "Sheik [Mohammed Hussein] Fadlallah is the founder and spiritual leader of Hezbollah but he disclaims any interest in violence."

So rather than stage an air strike that might kill a lot of innocent civilians, lead to more radicalization of Shiites throughout the region and perhaps trigger anti-US retaliation worldwide, officials say the following low-profile plan is being implemented:

- American and other intelligence agencies are intensifying surveillance of known and suspected members of the organization with the aim of unmasking its top planners, its meth-

ods of operation and its communications and supply links. If successful, the object is either to pre-empt planned operations or to take its key operatives "out of the game." Presidential authorization would be required for any use of force.

- Syria was asked and has agreed actively to search out supplies of explosives in the possession of suspected terrorist groups in Lebanon and to make a more rigorous attempt to prevent new supplies from reaching them.

- Israel has been sounded out on a more active counterterrorist campaign in Lebanon and a greater pooling of intelligence.

In the car bombing of the American Embassy in Kuwait last December two of the fingers of the man who drove the suicide vehicle were recovered and led to the arrest of several members of the Al Dawa Shiite sect. The operatives were Iraqi radicals, some of whom had been infiltrated from Iran, sources said. The links in that case suggested official Iranian government involvement.

But sources said that has not been established to anyone's satisfaction in the most recent atrocity. "Who controls what in Teh-

ran today?" one official asked. "And how can we know whether some Iranians in Lebanon might not feel that Tehran has lost its revolutionary fervor and might stage some bombings to reaffirm the right path?"

Sources said the Palestine Liberation Organization had been infiltrated by Western intelligence but that has not been the case in contending with Shiites who support the Islamic revolutionary government of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran.

"But old fashioned intelligence techniques are producing a lot more information than we had previously. I know a lot more about them today than I did a month ago," one senior official said.

"I wouldn't use a sledgehammer and kill a lot of innocent people," he continued, "or proceed on very imprecise knowledge because of frustration. We've got to patiently smoke them out one-by-one."